MASS. EA40.2:M86/992

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION
RESERVATIONS & HISTORIC SITES DIVISION

Policy Directive #506 August, 1989

UMASS/AMHERST
312066 0271 2787 7

Revised December, 1990
Revised September, 1991
Revised February, 1992

Subject: Mountain Bicycle Use in MDC Reservations (excluding Watershed lands)

Section Index: I. Introduction
II. General Policy Statement
III. General Regulations

I. Introduction

In working to preserve the precious natural and cultural resources found within MDC properties, the MDC Reservations and Historic Sites Division management staff critically analyzes the impact potential of new or expanding recreational uses. In order to achieve the Division goals of providing quality recreational experiences, while at the same time protecting resources, the reservations have been divided into management units. Hence, particularly sensitive or vulnerable sections may have greater restrictions than other sites.

The parameters that were considered in determining mountain bicycle use include: general sensitivity of soils, slopes, and habitats; public safety; significance of cultural resources; user group expectations; user experiences; public meeting comments; appropriateness of bicycle use; management concerns; and enforcement issues. Due to the complexity of this management task it is necessary to match appropriate uses with specific regions of each reservation. Mountain bicycle use, other than on paved roads, will be allowed only in Breakheart Reservation, and within designated areas of the Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells Reservations. Within these approved sections, selected trails and recreation areas will be closed to mountain bicycles.

This policy will be reviewed no later than one (1) year from its effective date.

II. General Policy Statement

Mountain bicycles are defined as non-motorized all-terrain vehicles. Appropriate use of mountain bicycles will be permitted only in Breakheart Reservation and within designated areas of Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells Reservation. Information regarding authorized sections in the Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells Reservations can be obtained at Reservation Headquarters or found posted on reservation bulletin boards. A seasonal closure between January 1 and April 15 will commence on January 1, 1993. In addition to the general regulations listed below, additional regulations specific to individual reservations may be established. It is the responsibility of all riders to be aware of all regulations governing use of mountain bicycles within specific MDC Reservations.

III. General Regulations

Breakheart, Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells Reservations

A. MDC Rules for Mountain Bicycles

1) MDC general regulations state that "the use of bicycles shall be permitted only in areas designated or authorized for such use by the MDC."

931/285

2) Unless designated otherwise, the appropriate use of bicycles is permitted on paved surfaces within MDC reservations.

3) Within authorized areas, mountain bicycles are permitted on service roads, i.e. reservation trails that maintain sufficient width for the operation of a motorized vehicle - unless otherwise designated as closed. Mountain bicycles are prohibited on trails narrower than service roads unless otherwise designated as open for such use.

4) Trails closed to bicycles will be so marked.

5) Mountain Bicycles are prohibited on trails between January 1 through April 15.

6) Notices of further restrictions will be posted on bulletin boards and at appropriate reservation offices. Riders must be aware of posted restrictions in the vicinity of waterfronts, public facilities and other popular recreation sites.

7) Bicycle riders must conduct themselves in a responsible manner at all times. Competitive and reckless riding is prohibited.

8) Reduced speed and caution must be exercised by bicycle riders when approaching curves, down grades, or areas of limited visibility in anticipation of other users.

9) Bicyclists must yield the right of way to other trail users including hikers and horseback riders.

10) Groups of more than 6 riders are not permitted without a special use permit obtained at Reservation Headquarters.

11) Bicyclists may be held responsible for damage or injury inflicted on other reservation users and property resources.

12) All persons shall comply with the direction of reservation personnel and Metropolitan Police officers in observing and obeying these rules and other applicable rules and regulations of the MDC and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

13) MDC police have full enforcement powers over bicyclists. Any violation of these regulations could result in arrest and be punishable by a fine according in accordance with M.G.L. c. 92, S.37.